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NSC BRIEFING

21 October 1954

SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

I. Diem's position growing extremely weak as crisis prolonged; his government may collapse at any time.

A. Ely has revived Tam's candidacy for premiership.

B. French acting high commissioner who has been strongly pro-Diem says premier's prestige reduced to zero; suggests Diem's brother, Luyen, as suitable successor.

C. Heath sees these views as indicating extent of deterioration in Diem's position.

II. Raphael-Leygues, Mendes-France's advisor on Indochina, sees only hope as government of sects led by Prince Buu Hoi.

A. Leygues plan would involve ouster of both Diem and Bao Dai.

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- B. He claims this plan is alternative to currently dominant theme in French thinking: i.e. drop Diem and work toward rapprochement with Viet Minh.
- C. However, Buu Hoi is longtime fellow traveller and Leygues plan may come to same thing.

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